

Claim 14, from which claims 15-21 depend, defines a method for pressing a ceramic stacked layer structure. According to the method a die is laterally positioned on a die base using a plurality of thrust mechanisms, wherein the die has a bottom plate and sidewalls forming a recess for receiving the ceramic layered structure. The ceramic layered structure is pressed in the recess between the bottom plate and a top die and lateral force is applied via the plurality of thrust mechanisms on outer faces of the sidewalls in directions toward the recess.

It is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill would not have looked to the method of *Zalozecky* to press a stacked layer structure because *Zalozecky* concerns equipment that forms an opened-top molded objects by pressing a ram into material. Such equipment would destroy the stacked layer structure for its intended function. Likewise, one of ordinary skill would not have used the equipment of *Zalozecky* in the manner in which equipment is used in the claimed method because to do so would destroy *Zalozecky* for its intended function, i.e., forming opened-top molded objects. A modification that destroys a reference for its intended function is, of course, impermissible.

In view of the differences between claim 14 and *Zalozecky*, and in view of the fact that one skilled in the art would not have modified the manner of operation of *Zalozecky* to perform the claimed method, it is respectfully submitted that claim 14 and the claims dependent therefrom, claims 15-21, define patentably over *Zalozecky*.

Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Zalozecky* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,370,760 to *Mori et al.* Claim 18 depends from claim 14 and recites placing the stacked layer structure into the recess in the die, and

transporting the die with the stacked layer structure in the recess to the die base. *Mori et al.* is cited in combination with *Zalozucky* as allegedly disclosing, in a method of manufacturing multilayer ceramic electronic components, stacking the die with the material/ceramic structure first then placing the die and stacked material into a die base. It is respectfully submitted that *Mori et al.* cures none of the defects of *Zalozucky* as discussed above with regard to claim 14 and that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have combined *Zalozucky* and *Mori et al.* in the manner asserted in the Official Action at least because to do so would destroy *Zalozucky* for its intended purpose, as discussed above.

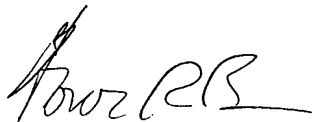
In view of the differences between claim 14 and *Zalozucky* in view of *Mori et al.*, it is respectfully submitted that claim 14 and the claim dependent therefrom, including claim 18, define patentably over those references.

It is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims, claims 14-21, define patentably over the cited references. Allowance is cordially urged.

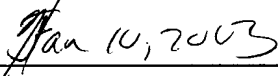
If the Examiner should be of the opinion that a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any outstanding issues, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

By: 
Harold R. Brown III
Registration No. 36,341

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620

Date: 

APPENDIX

14. (Amended) A method for pressing a ceramic stacked layer structure, comprising the steps of:

laterally positioning a die on a die base using a plurality of thrust mechanisms, wherein the die has a bottom plate and sidewalls forming a recess for receiving the ceramic layered structure; and

pressing the ceramic layered structure in the recess between the bottom plate and a top die [;] and

[simultaneously] applying lateral force via the plurality of thrust mechanisms on outer faces of the sidewalls in directions toward the recess.